Walt

Disney World in Pictures

1971-1996

EXPERTS predicted great things for Walt Disney World in October 1971. They said the park, which was then just the Magic Kingdom, might attract as many as 6 million visitors a year. Increased tourism, it was said, would raise the number of Orlando-area jobs by 50,000. Twenty-five years later, the Walt Disney World numbers are in: Attendance is well over 30 million annually; 1,100,000 local jobs have been created — and counting. It's been a wild, fun ride. And luckily, one that's been well documented photographically from the earliest days. Happy Birthday, Walt Disney World. And many happy returns.

~ 1965: Ample land, tourists, and sun made Florida the logical place for Walt to build his dream park; 1971: Spaceman Mickey welcomed the world to Tomorrowland (opposite)

1964: Spotting Bay Lake from the air, Walt pointed at the pine barrens and swamplands and declared, "This is the place"

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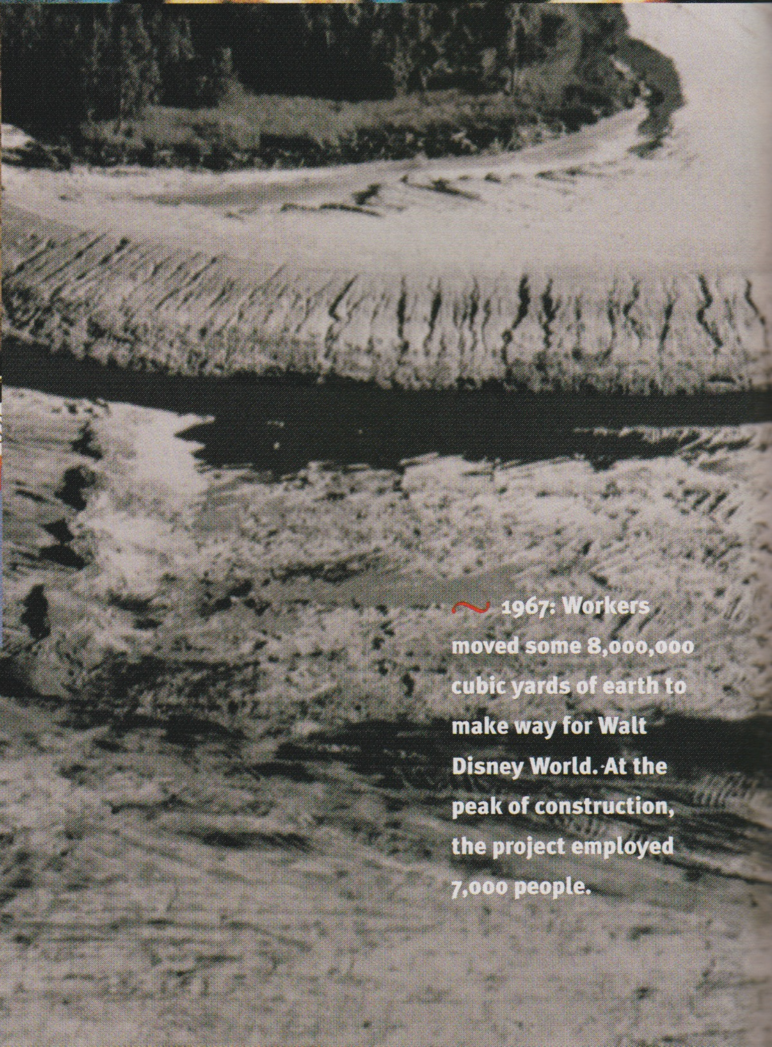
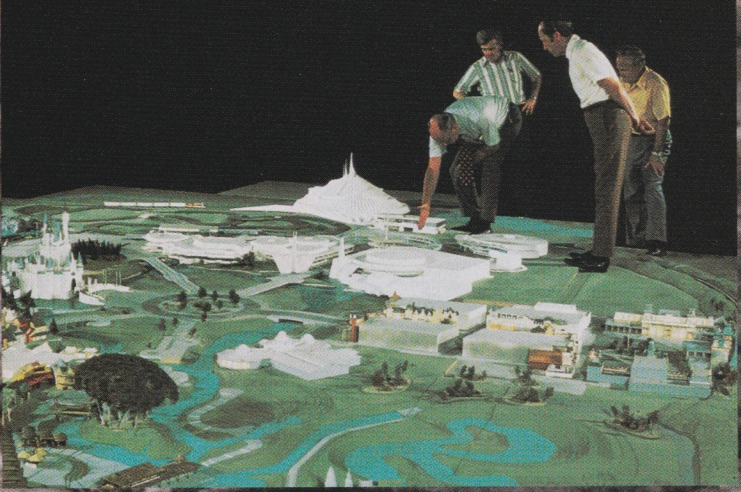
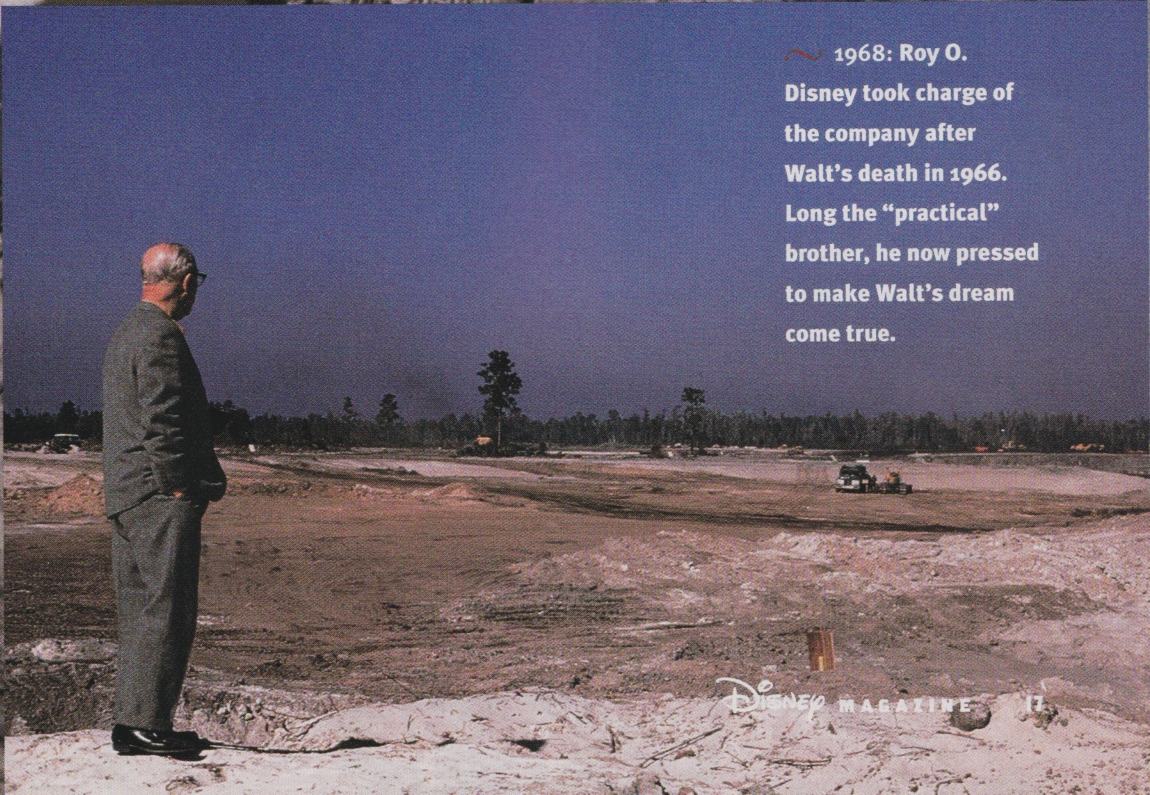
1965: With Roy O. Disney and Florida governor Haydon Burns looking on, Walt announced development plans at a November 16th press conference in Orlando



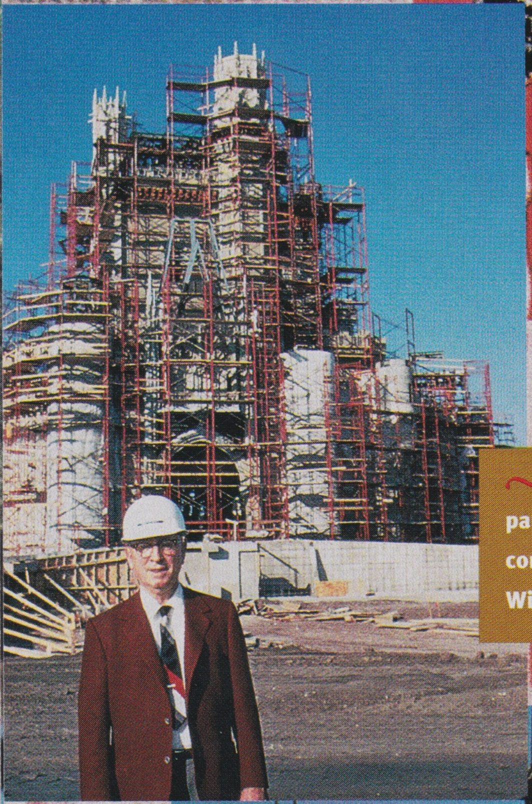
1967: Workers moved some 8,000,000 cubic yards of earth to make way for Walt Disney World. At the peak of construction, the project employed 7,000 people.

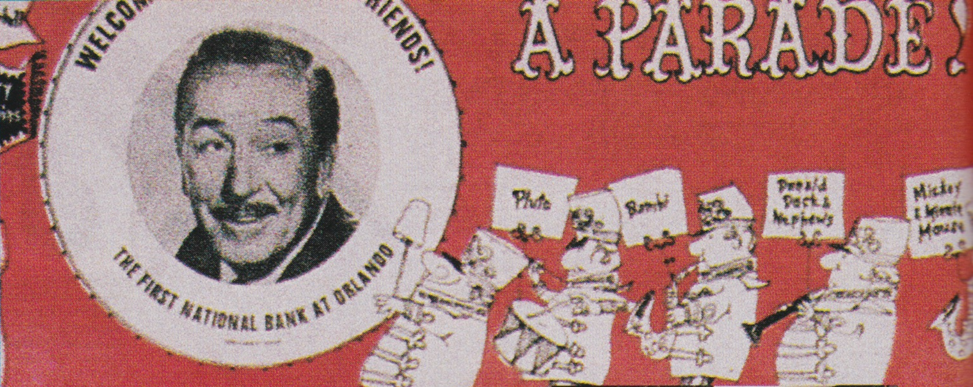


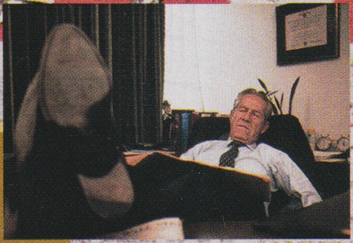
1969: Conceptual giants John Hench, George McGinnis, Joe Kramer, and Bob Sewell (left to right) examined an early model of the Magic Kingdom



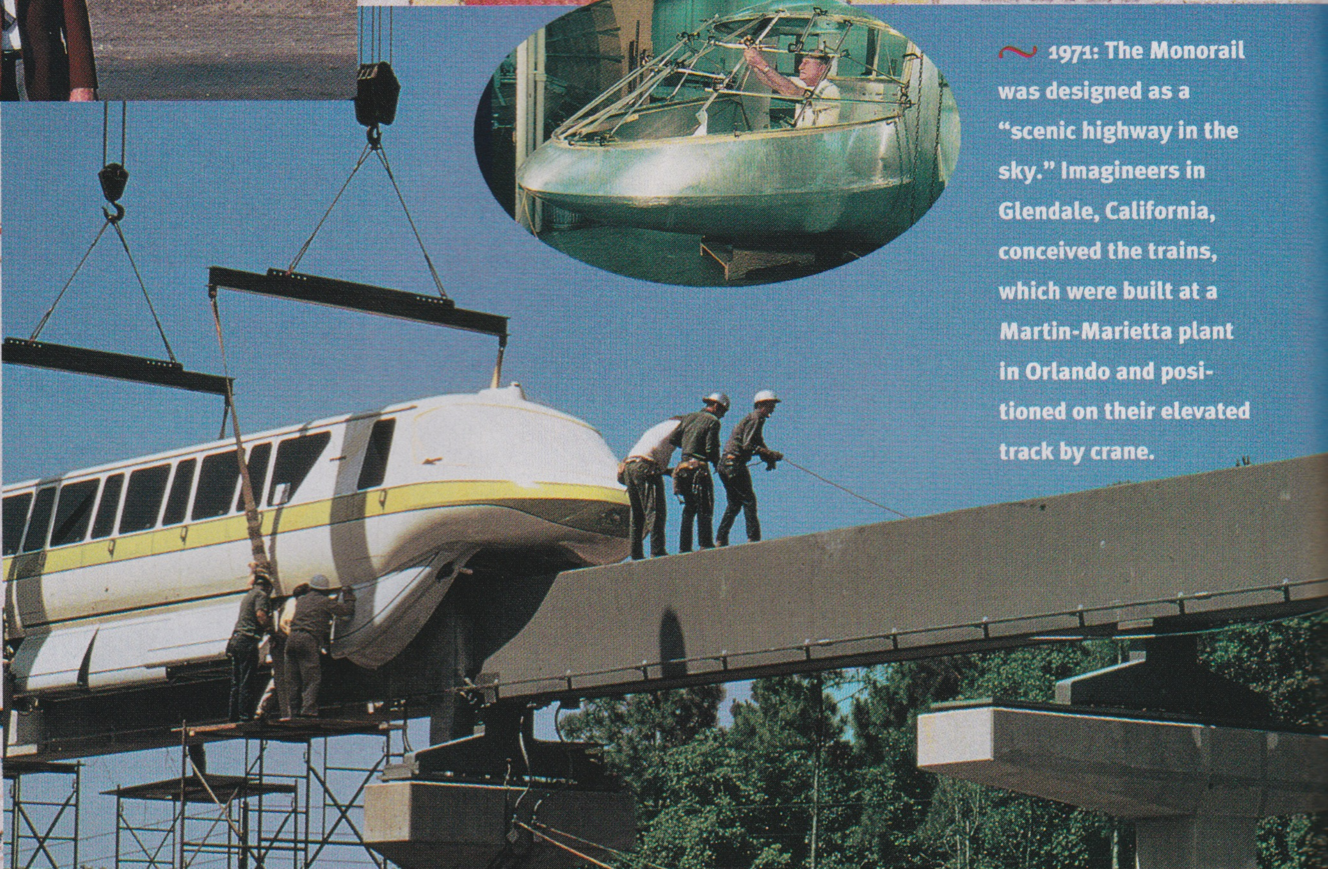
1968: Roy O. Disney took charge of the company after Walt's death in 1966. Long the "practical" brother, he now pressed to make Walt's dream come true.



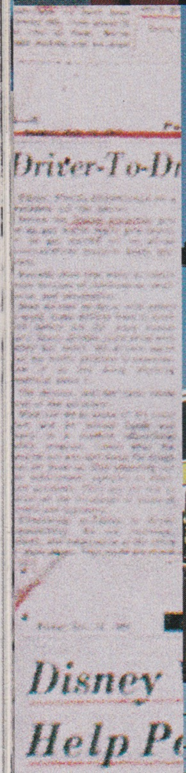

WELCOME ... FRIENDS!
THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK AT ORLANDO
A PARADE
Pluto
Bambi
Donald Duck & Nephews
Mickey & Minnie Mouse



1970: With opening day near, Roy O. Disney paused in front of a scaffold-veiled Castle (left); construction supervisor retired Major General William "Joe" Potter (right) logged some rare desk time



1971: The Monorail was designed as a "scenic highway in the sky." Imagineers in Glendale, California, conceived the trains, which were built at a Martin-Marietta plant in Orlando and positioned on their elevated track by crane.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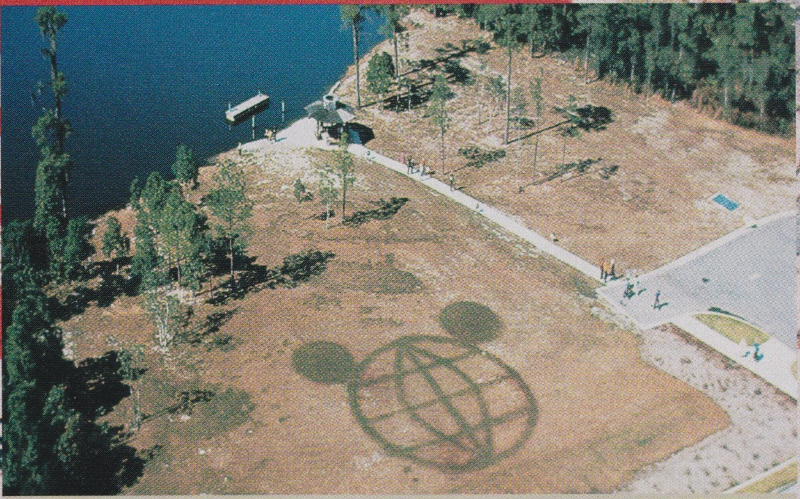
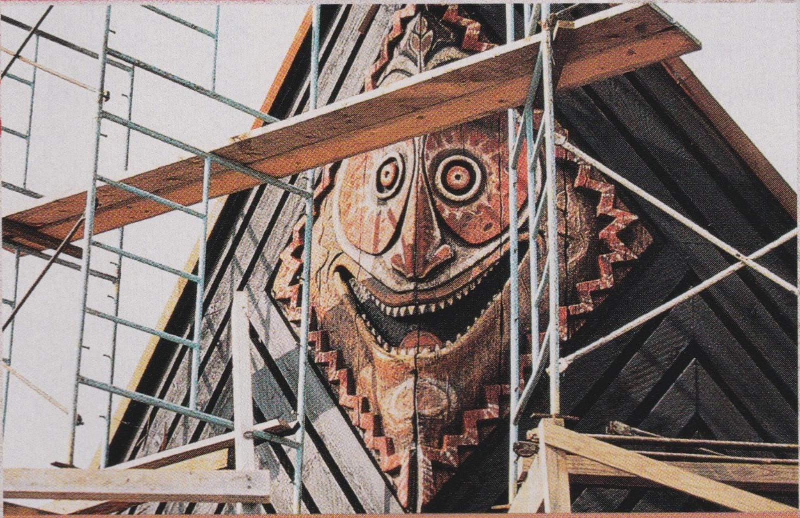
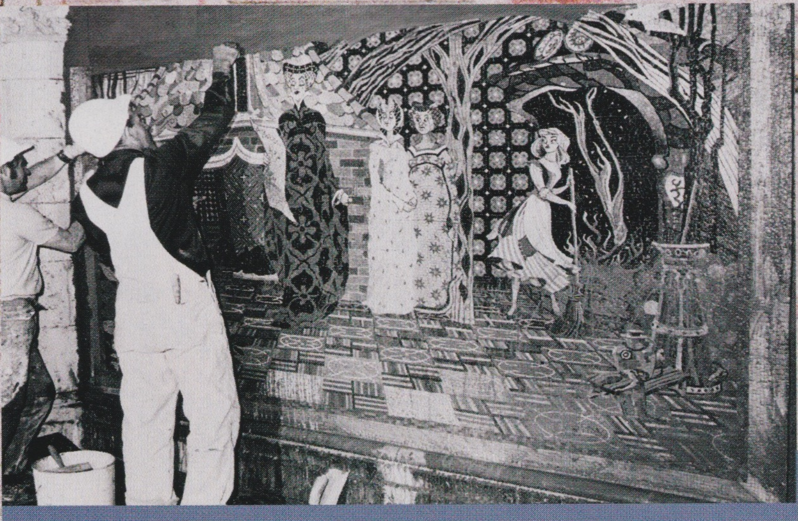


1970: Before the gates opened, Disney had made its mark on the land



1971: Along with the Polynesian (above) and the Contemporary, original plans called for Venetian, Asian, and Persian resorts



1971: To create Cinderella Castle's famed murals, workers hand-set more than a million pieces of Italian glass

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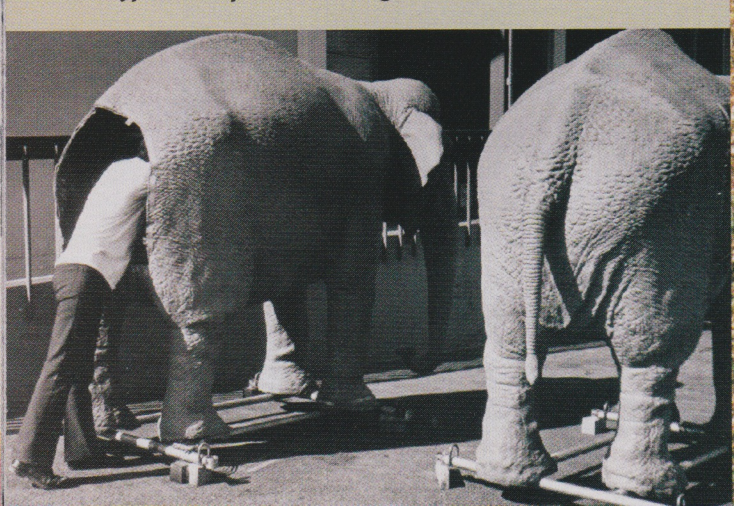
1971: Born and bred at WED Enterprises in Glendale, California, Audio-Animatronics elephants were released into the wilds of the Jungle Cruise

1970: Imagineer Bill Justice programs an Audio-Animatronics bear for Country Bear Jamboree (above); 1971: An elephant builder gets into his work (below)



1971: Topiary artists at the park's Tree Research Center tapped into shrubs to find the animals hidden within. Creating whimsical sculpture was only one of many horticultural tasks — by opening day, landscapers had transplanted more than 60,000 plants and trees on the grounds.

PLEASE
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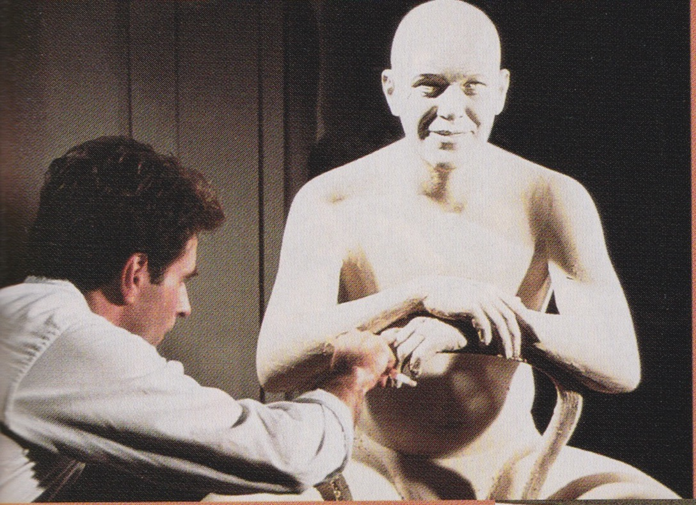
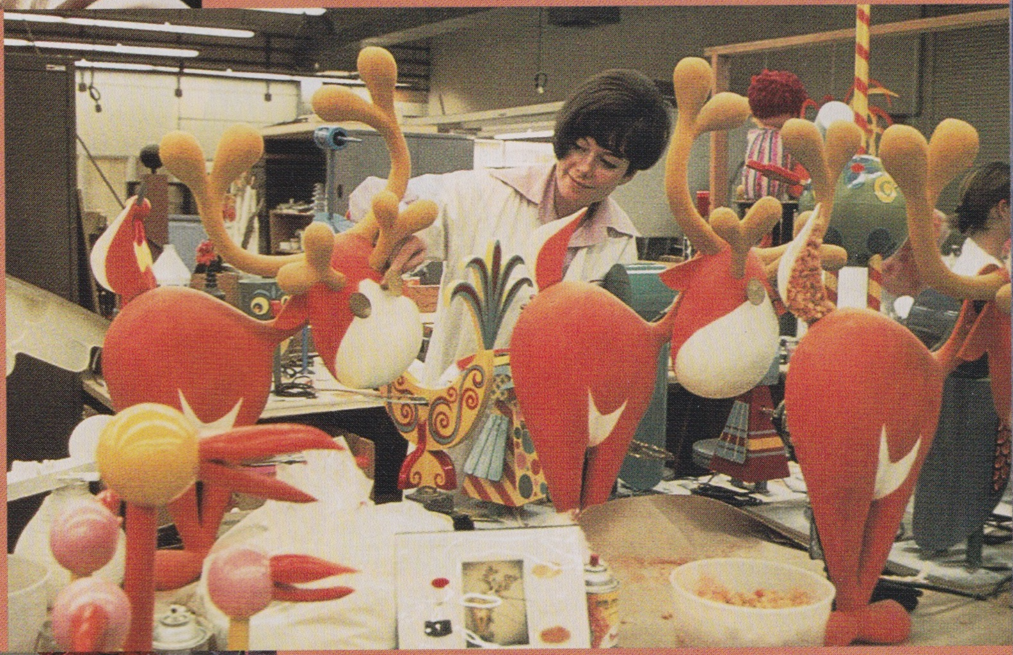
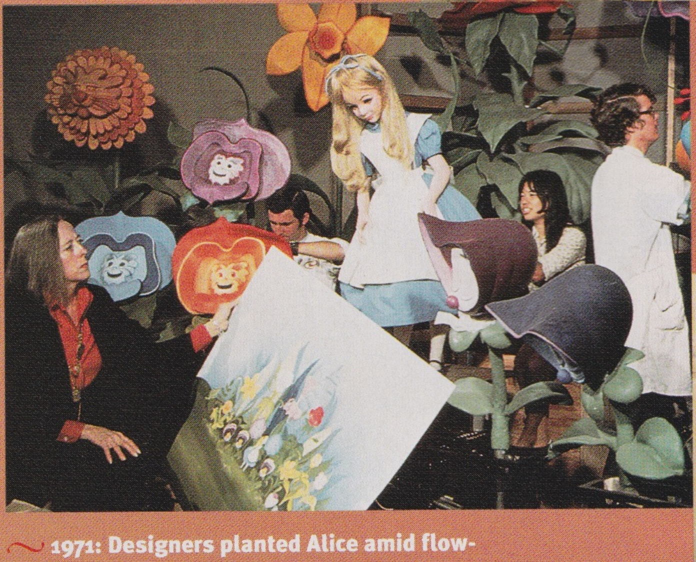
ANIMALS



1970s: As park construction progressed, Imagineers labored to devise new Audio-Animatronics people. This father figure was built for General Electric's Carousel of Progress at the 1964 New York World's Fair; it moved to Walt Disney World in 1975.

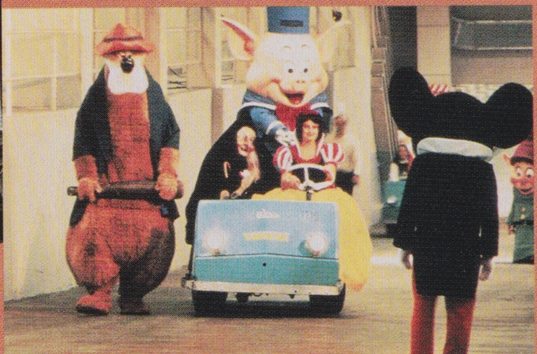
1971: What does it take to get into the Mickey Mouse Revue? Practice. And lots of electric circuitry (left); a herd of It's a Small World reindeer takes shape (right).

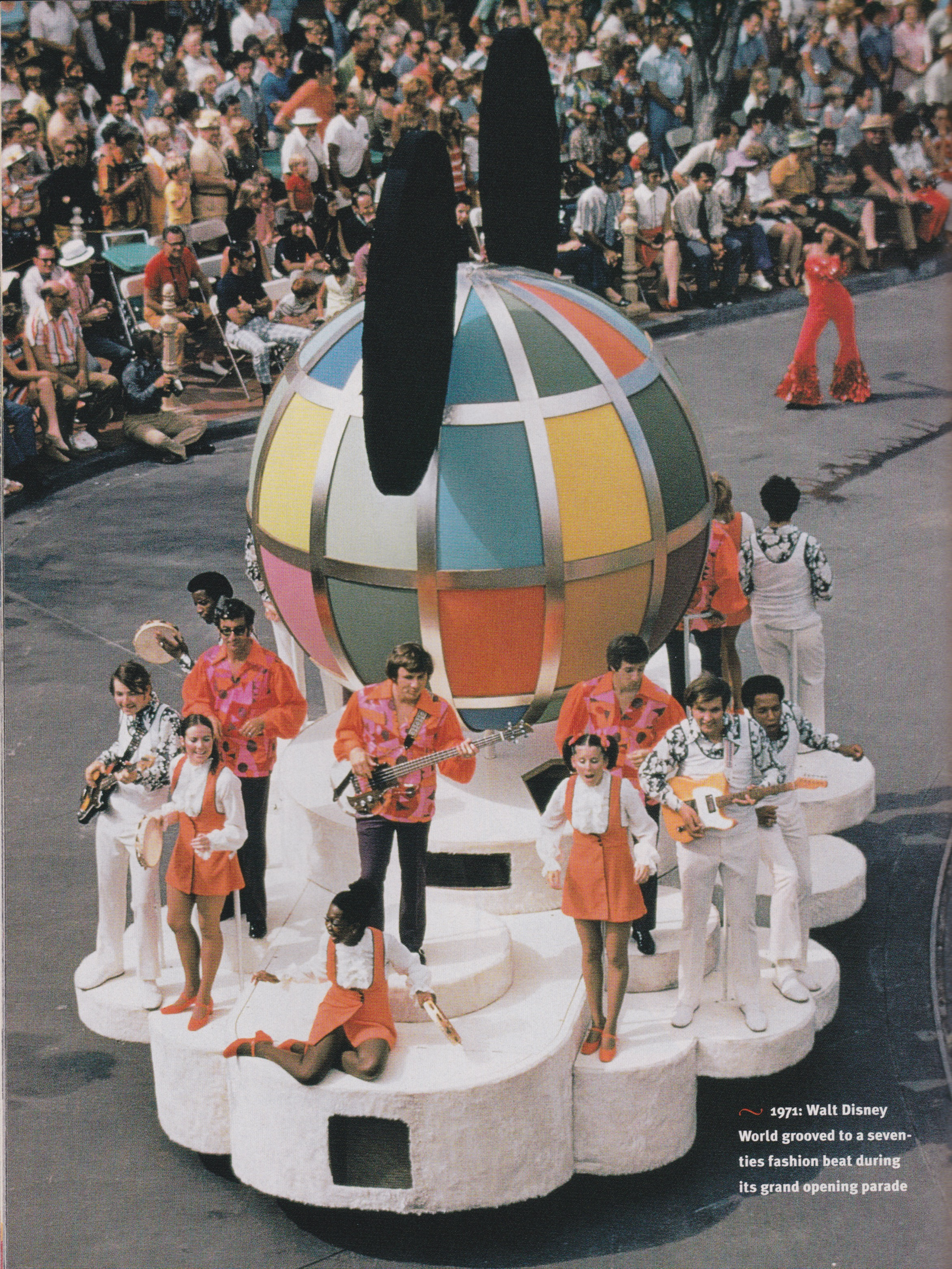




1971: Designers planted Alice amid flowers at the Mickey Mouse Revue. Her "All in a Golden Afternoon" sequence was among the attraction's most popular.

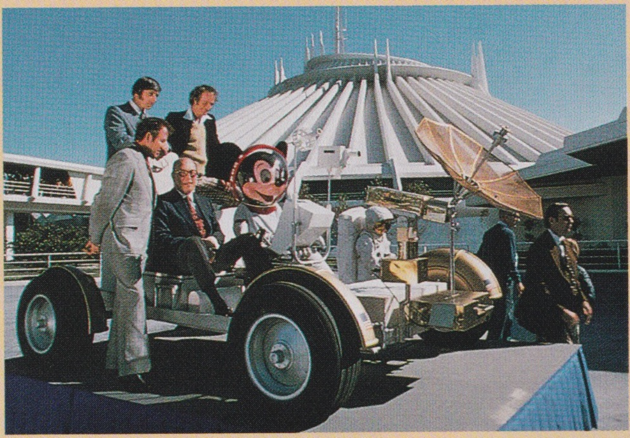
1973: Have you ever wondered how those Magic Kingdom characters appear out of nowhere — as if by, well, magic? They rely on a nine-acre complex of tunnels called Utilidors.





1971: Walt Disney World grooved to a seventies fashion beat during its grand opening parade

1972: Goofy marched to a different drummer on the first anniversary of Walt Disney World



1974: Apollo 17 astronauts had the right stuff to help Mickey launch Space Mountain

SALUTE TO GEORGIA
GOVERNOR JIMMY CARTER
V.I.P.
of the day

1976: Before going to Washington, Jimmy Carter took his family to Main Street, U.S.A.

1973: Since the opening of Walt Disney World, the Polynesian Revue has made sure everyone's hip to hula

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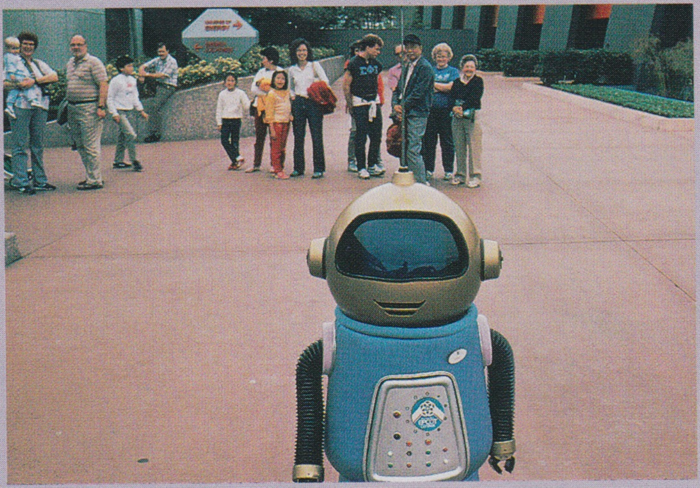
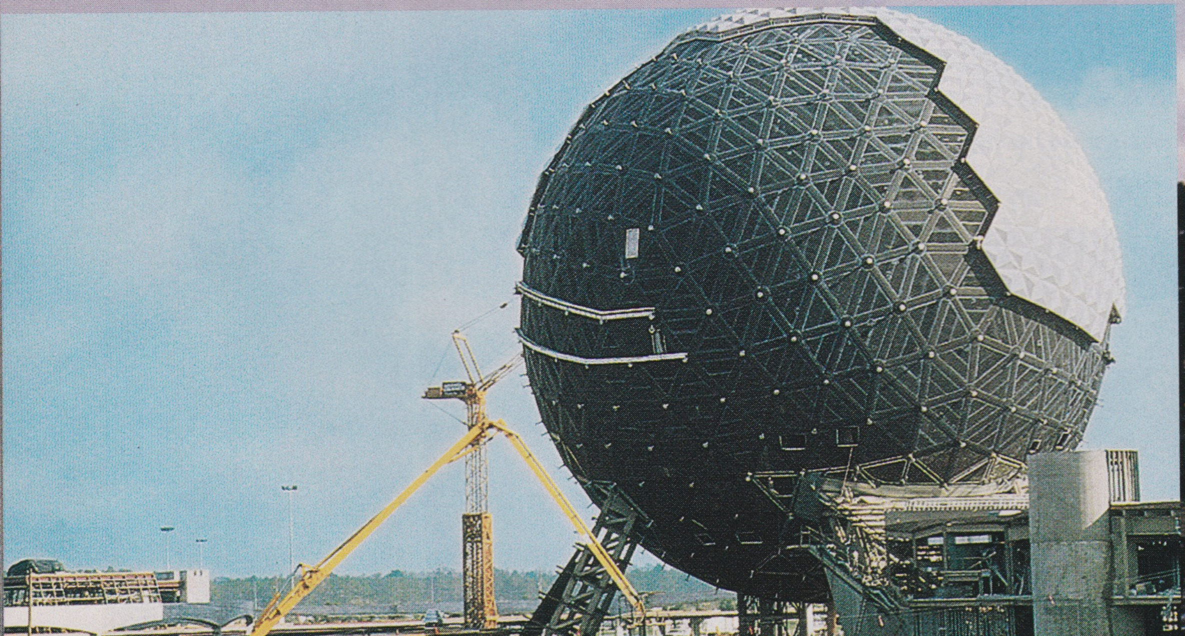
1976: For the country's bicentennial, Walt Disney World threw its largest parade ever

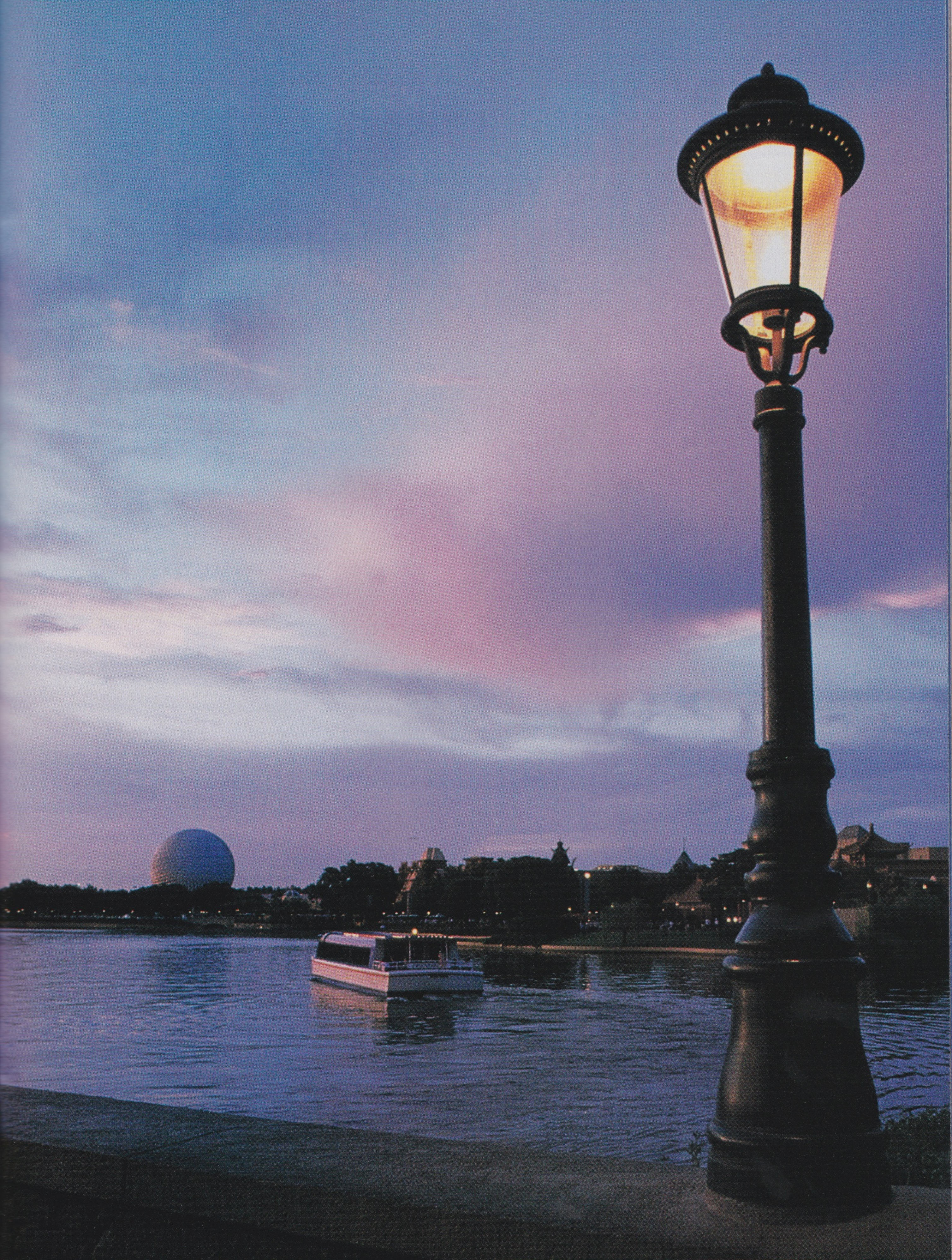
MICHAEL CARROLL

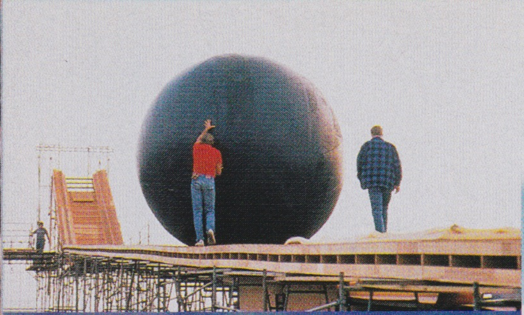


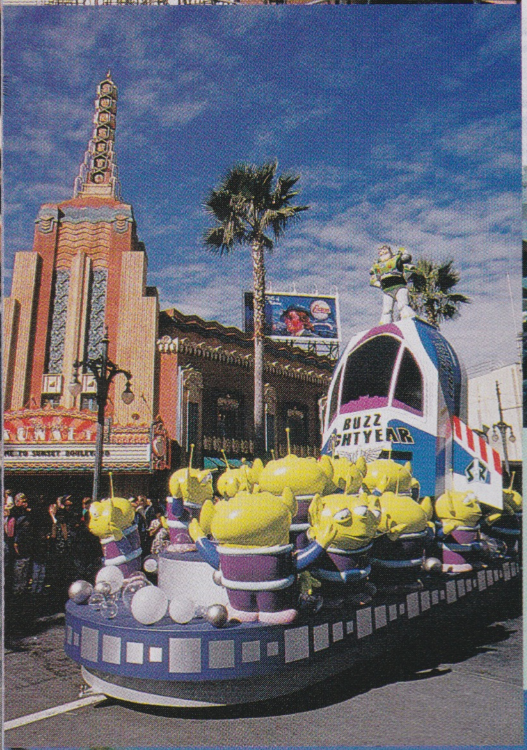
1982: Walt's dream of an Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow was realized with the opening of Epcot, Walt Disney World's second park. A robot named Gyro (above) welcomed guests to his futuristic domain; Spaceship Earth (known to many as the great golf ball in the sky) received its distinctive dimpled skin (below).

1985: Across the lagoon (right) from Future World lie the 11 pavilions of World Showcase. The two Epcot areas represent Walt's twin obsessions: technology and international amity.









Walt declared in 1965, “There’s enough land here to contain all the ideas and plans we can possibly imagine.” More than two decades later, Disney-MGM Studios became the third major park at Walt Disney World. Clockwise from top left, 1988: workers get the ball rolling on Indy Jones; a tree swings in Hollywood; 1996: a friend of Minnie says cheese; Buzz and pals in the *Toy Story* parade.

MICHAEL CARROLL

~ **1995: Long a hurricane coast, Florida now has Blizzard Beach to contend with (above and below). Frontierland has its own watery thrill, Splash Mountain, with its five-story free fall (right).**

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS THIS PAGE: MICHAEL CARROLL

1996: The more things change ... Legend of the Lion King plays where the Mickey Mouse Revue once did (above); like others before him, Quasimodo now has a stage show (left)

MICHAEL CARROLL

ANNE S. THAMES

1996: BoardWalk transports visitors back to the golden age of seaside resorts (above); two of the millions of fans who are growing up with Disney (left)

1996: A quarter century after it opened, Walt Disney World still has the power to enchant